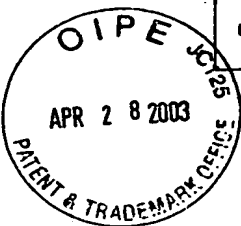


I hereby certify that this correspondence was deposited with the U.S. Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231, on the date shown below.

Dated: April 21, 2003

Signature: [Signature]
(Thomas M. Palisi)

Docket No.: SPINE 3.0-2658
(PATENT)



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Utility Application of: :
Castro et al. : Group Art Unit: 3738
: :
Application No. : Examiner: A. Stewart
09/815,504 : :
: :
Filed: March 23, 2001 : Date: April 21, 2003
: :
For: MODULAR IMPLANT FOR :
FUSING ADJACENT BONE :
STRUCTURE :

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

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TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Dear Sir:

In response to the Restriction Requirement mailed November 2, 2002 and the Communication mailed March 21, 2003, and preliminary to initiation of the prosecution of the above-identified pending U.S. patent application, the following amendments and remarks are respectfully submitted.

IN THE DRAWINGS

Applicants submit herewith five (5) sheets of formal drawings containing FIGS. 1-6B.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-20.

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